WE CLAIM

1. A computer program product comprising a computer program operable to control a computer to scan a plurality of computer files for predefined properties, said computer program comprising:

computer file request logic operable to control said computer to issue computer file requests for computer files to be scanned;

scanning logic operable to control said computer to scan said requested computer files for predefined properties in dependence upon property defining data defining said predefined properties;

update checking logic operable to control said computer to periodically check for an update request to update said property defining data;

update applying logic operable to control said computer to stop said computer file requests and to update said property defining data in response to said update request, and, on completion of said update, to resume operation of said computer file request logic such that subsequently requested files are scanned against said updated property defining data;

wherein, when all of said plurality of computer files have been requested, said computer file request logic is operable to request a first computer file again.

2. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said update checking logic, is operable to check for an update after completion of each file scan.

3. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on said computer.

4. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on a hard disk of said computer.

5. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer program comprises at least one priority code, said priority code determining an amount of said computer 's resources to be allocated to said computer program.

6.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 5, wherein said priority code is time dependent and comprises a high priority code during non-working periods and a low or zero priority code during normal working time.

7.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer file request logic is operable to issue sequential computer file requests for computer files to be scanned.

8.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer file request logic is operable, in response to an addition of computer files to said plurality of computer files, to issue a request for said newly added computer files.

9.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said computer program comprises storage logic, said storage logic being operable to control said computer to store computer file identifying data identifying said last requested computer file.

10.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 9, wherein on resumption of operation of said computer program following a stoppage, said computer file request logic is operable to check said requested computer file against said stored computer file identifying data and if said requested computer file is not a computer file subsequent to a computer file identified by said stored computer file identifying data to discard said computer file without implementing said scanning logic and to request a subsequent file.

11.   A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, said computer program further comprising:
stop condition checking logic operable to control said computer to periodically check for a stop condition and to end said computer file scan on detection of said stop condition.

12.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files for predefined properties, said method comprising the following steps:
    (i) issuing computer file requests for computer files to be scanned;

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(ii) scanning said requested computer files for predefined properties in dependence upon property defining data defining said predefined properties;

(iii) periodically checking for update requests to update said property defining data;

(iv) stopping said computer file requests and updating said property defining data in response to said update request;

(v) on completion of said update, resuming issuing said computer file requests such that subsequently requested files are scanned against said updated property defining data;

wherein, when all of said plurality of computer files have been requested, said computer file request logic is operable to request a first computer file again.

13   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, wherein said check for update requests is performed after each file is scanned.

14.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on said computer.

15.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on a hard disk of said computer.

16.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, wherein said method comprises at least one priority code associated with it, said priority code determining an amount of a computer resources to be allocated to performing said method at a particular time.

17.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 16, wherein said priority code is time dependent and comprises a high priority code during non-working periods and a low or zero priority code during normal working time.

18.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12,

wherein said computer file requests are issued sequentially.

19.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, said method comprising the further step of:

in response to an addition of computer files to said plurality of computer files, issuing a request for said newly added computer files.

20.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, said method comprising the further step of:

storing computer file identifying data identifying said requested computer file.

21.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 20, wherein on resumption of said scanning method following a stoppage, said method comprises the further step of checking said requested computer file against said stored computer file identifying data and if said requested computer file is not a computer file subsequent to a previously requested computer file identified by said stored computer file identifying data, discarding said computer file without performing said scanning step and requesting a subsequent file.

22.   A method of scanning a plurality of computer files as claimed in claim 12, said method comprising the further step of:

periodically checking for a stop condition and terminating said computer file scan on detection of said stop condition.

23.   Apparatus for scanning a plurality of computer files for predefined properties, said apparatus comprising:

computer file requester operable to issue computer file requests for computer files to be scanned;

predetermined property scanner operable to scan said requested computer files for predefined properties in dependence upon property defining data defining said predefined properties;

update request checker operable to periodically check for an update request to update said property defining data;

update generator operable to stop said computer file requests and to update said property defining data in response to said update request, and, on completion of said update, to trigger resumption of operation of said computer file requester such that subsequently requested files are scanned against said updated property defining data; wherein, when all of said plurality of computer files have been requested, said computer file requester is operable to request a first computer file again.

24.   Apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said update request checker is operable to check for an update after completion of each file scan.

25.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on a computer.

26.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said plurality of computer files, comprise all the computer files stored on a hard disk of a computer.

27.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said apparatus is responsive to priority codes, such that an amount of said apparatus's resources allocated to scanning said plurality of computer files is determined by a priority code associated with said scan.

28.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein said priority codes are time dependent, high priority codes being given to said scan during non-working periods and a low or zero priority code being given during normal working time.

29.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said computer file requester is operable to issue sequential computer file requests for computer files to be scanned.

30.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, wherein said computer file requester is operable, in response to an addition of computer files to said plurality of computer files, to issue a request for said newly added computer files.

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31.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, said apparatus further comprising a store, said store being operable to store computer file identifying data identifying said requested computer file.

32.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 31, wherein on resumption of operation of said apparatus following a stoppage, said computer file requester is operable to check said requested computer file against said stored computer file identifying data and if said requested computer file is not a computer file subsequent to a previously requested computer file identified by said stored computer file identifying data to discard said computer file without implementing said predetermined property scanner and to request a subsequent file.

33.   An apparatus as claimed in claim 23, said apparatus further comprising:
a stop condition checker operable to control said apparatus to periodically check for a stop condition and to terminate said computer file scan on detection of said stop condition.